



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF Disabilities and Special Needs

For Immediate Release August 5, 2019

DDSN Awards the Golden Palmetto for the 44th Year

Fairfield County is the Winner for the 6th time

(Hilton Head Island, S.C.) The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) today awarded Fairfield County the 2018 Golden Palmetto Award. The Golden Palmetto is DDSN's way of recognizing and thanking county governments in South Carolina for making the lives of people with disabilities a priority in the previous calendar year.

DDSN Commission Chair, Gary Lemel made the presentation today at the annual conference of the South Carolina Association of Counties in Hilton Head. Fairfield County Council Chair, Neil Robinson was on hand to receive the award.

Fairfield County is being recognized this year in particular for their employment of people with disabilities. They operate a recycling center and maintain lawns and cleaning services at Fairfield County buildings. Fairfield County officials make time to attend local events put on by the Fairfield County Disabilities and Special Needs Board. In addition, Fairfield County provided generous financial support to the Board. The county also provided a great deal on "in kind" support in 2018 such as topsoil to landscape the home of persons with disabilities, truckloads of mulch, free grading and gravel for a driveway at one of the residences. Fairfield contributed to the further expansion of facilities to serve residents with disabilities by donating land for expansion of the Board's current facility.

Fairfield County DSN Board Executive Director, Laura Collins said, "Fairfield County Government has consistently given immeasurable support to our agency and promoted the employment of people with disabilities and special needs in Fairfield County for 36 years. I am pleased to see them awarded with the Golden Palmetto."

The Golden Palmetto has been awarded by DDSN for the past 44 years. This year Fairfield County becomes the first 6 time winner in the history of the award. Fairfield previously won in 1996, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

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“The fact that this is the 6th time that Fairfield County has won this award, shows the deep commitment to serving people with disabilities that exists in Fairfield County. We think it is important to recognize that from the State level,” DDSN Commission Chair Gary Lemel said.

“I want to thank Fairfield County for recognizing that people with disabilities can do great work for and giving our consumers a chance to show the community what they can do. I congratulate Fairfield County for that effort,” DDSN State Director Mary Poole said.

The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs is the state agency that plans, develops, coordinates and funds services for South Carolinians with the severe, lifelong disabilities of:

- intellectual disability and related disabilities
- autism spectrum disorder
- traumatic brain injury
- spinal cord injury and similar disability



(Left to Right) Shirley Greene, Board Member Fairfield County DSN Board of Directors; Patti Davis, Clerk to Council, Fairfield County Council; Gary Lemel, Chairman, SC Commission on Disabilities and Special Needs; Bertha Goins, Vice Chairman, Council Liaison for Local DSNB; Jason Taylor, Fairfield County Administrator; Neil Robinson, Chairman, Fairfield County Council; Councilman Clarence Gilbert; Councilman Moses Bell; Diane Willis, Board Member, Fairfield County DSN Board of Directors; and Laura Collins, Executive Director, Fairfield County DSN Board

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